

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

Title:

DESKTOP FILING SYSTEM

David C. Eby
Aaron W. Smith
Jayson J. Serrault
Tobin Vetting

658 Pickford Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53711
1474 Smith Drive, Wooster, Ohio 44691
1007 Meadow Circle, Wausau, Wisconsin 54401
P.O. Box 116, Kohler, Wisconsin 53044

DESKTOP FILING SYSTEM

FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0001] The present disclosure relates to a method and apparatus of organizing a desktop, and more specifically to a plate with attached file dividers.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] Research has shown that people organize their work stations in one of two manners, either by piling files up on their desk, or by filing them away. Those who pile generally prefer having materials at their fingertips, and prefer not to have the hassle of maintaining a highly organized work area. This is efficient if the user does not have an overbearing number of files on his or her desk. However, it is nearly inevitable that a large number of files will accumulate, and the work space will become inefficient and disorganized.

[0003] Research has further shown that various areas of a work space are used consistently, while others are virtually not used at all. Those who keep files on their desks normally keep the files in the usable space, thereby increasing the clutter and inefficiency of the work space. Those who tend to file papers in an organized manner normally file them in a space that is not used frequently, and therefore the space is generally not easily accessible.

[0004] It would also be helpful to have a filing system in place that can be maintained in the useful space in the work zone. In particular, it would be helpful for those who pile to have a system which keeps the files located in an organized manner on their desktop, as they prefer. Finally, this filing system should be simple to manufacture, aesthetically pleasing, and cost effective.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0005] Figure 1 is an isometric view of a desktop filer constructed in accordance with the teachings of this disclosure.
- [0006] Figure 2 is a top view of the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0007] Figure 3 is a side view of the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0008] Figure 4 is a isometric view of a file being filed in the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0009] Figure 5 is a top view of the plate of the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0010] Figure 6 is a top view of one of the vanes of the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0011] Figure 7 is a side view of the elastic band of the desktop filer of FIG. 1.
- [0012] Figure 8 is a detail view of the end hook of the elastic band of FIG. 7.
- [0013] Figure 8a is an isometric view of the end hook of FIG. 8.
- [0014] Figure 9 is an isometric view of a second example of desktop filer, constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention.
- [0015] Figure 10 is a top view of the plate of the second desktop filer of FIG. 9, but with the vanes removed.
- [0016] Figure 11 is a top view of one of the vanes of the second desktop filer of FIG. 9.
- [0017] Figure 12 is a side view of the desktop filer of FIG. 9 in its secured position.
- [0018] While the disclosure is susceptible to various modifications and alternative constructions, certain illustrative embodiments thereof have been shown in the

drawings and will be described below in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intention to limit the disclosure to the specific forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, alternative constructions, and the equivalents falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] Referring now to the drawings, and in particular to FIGS. 1-3, an example of a desktop filer 10 is shown. The filer 10 includes a plate 12 supporting a plurality of vanes 14, including a first vane 14a, a second vane 14b, etc. The vanes 14 are constrained to lay against the plate 12 by a restraining band 16. This disclosure describes files being stored in the device with the device being placed on a desk top, however, other items may be stored and organized, such as books, maps, compact discs, retail store displays, etc., and the device may be placed in other locations.

[0020] As shown in FIG. 5, the plate 12 includes a plurality of slots 18. The slots 18 are spaced apart from each other a distance d , large enough to fit a typical file in between. As used herein, a typical file may be small such that it includes only a few sheets of paper, or larger to include a stack of papers. In this example, the slots 18 are configured in slot pairs 20 that are disposed in the plate 12. Each slot pair 20 is configured to receive portions of a vane 14 therein. An axis A-A is defined between the slots 18 of each pair 20.

[0021] The plate 12 further includes an opening 22 defining a handle 24. Disposed in the opening 22 is a catch 26 with two grooves 28 on each end of the catch 26. Finally, on the side of the plate opposite the handle 24 is a pair of openings 30a and 30b. The plate 12 can be manufactured out of any material known

to have enough stiffness and durability to support a plurality of office files and to endure common abuse, but should also be lightweight and inexpensive, such as plastic or fiberboard.

[0022] FIG. 6 shows an example of a vane 14. Each vane 14 includes a pair of tabs 32 configured to be inserted into a respective slot pair 20 and a tongue 33 disposed between the tabs 32. The tabs 32 can be fastened to the back side of the plate 12 by any means known in the art, including heat staking, welding, glueing, etc. The tabs 32 are fastened such that the vane 14 and tongue 33 tend to lay flat against the plate 12, as best shown in FIG. 3.

[0023] The tongue 33 lies across the axis A-A, as shown in FIG. 2, such that the tongue 33 resists the rotation of the vane 14 about the axis A-A. Thus, to insert a file 35 as shown in FIG. 4, the first vane 14a, for example, is pulled up from the plate 12 via the flexibility of the vane 14 itself, and not from rotation of the vane 14 about the axis A-A. Accordingly, the vanes 14 can be made of any material that is flexible, yet is strong enough to resist permanently deforming from everyday use. For example, as with the base 12, the vanes 14 may be manufactured from plastics such as polypropylene, polyethylene, or paper products such as fiberboard.

[0024] The vanes 14 may include a label 34 disposed on the vane 14 adjacent the free end 36. The user may note on the label 34 any information, such as when the file must be addressed, which file is stored, etc. The vane 14 is ideally sized to be larger than a standard file, although it can be smaller. Further, the vanes 14 and plate 12 are shown to have mating pairs of tabs 32 and slots 18, however, it is conceivable that each vane 14 could have one or more tabs 32, and plate 12 could have at least as many slots 18 to receive the tabs 32. Furthermore, the vanes 14 could be attached to the plate 12 in any number of ways known in the art without

departing from the scope of this disclosure. This construction of the vanes 14 is illustrative, and other dividing structure, such as punching the vanes 14 out of the plate 12, are within the scope of this disclosure.

[0025] Referring now to FIGS. 2 and 7, a restraining band 16 with two sections 16a and 16b is shown. In this example, the band 16 is manufactured from an elastic material, such as rubber, but a non-elastic material could be used as well. The band 16 has a fastened end 38 and a hooking end 40. The fastened end 38 includes two ends 42a and 42b of the sections 16a and 16b which are configured to be inserted into the openings 30a and 30b of the plate 12 and fastened to the plate 12 in any way known in the art. This includes welding, adhering, crimping a stopper to the ends 42a and 42b, or even running a single band 16 through one opening 30a and back through the second opening 30b to form both sections 16a and 16b of the band 16. Further, a band 16 may be used that has only one section 16a, i.e. a single strip.

[0026] The hooking end 40, as seen in FIGS. 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8, is used to latch the elastic band 16 over the catch 26 in the plate 12. This fastens the band 16 in an elongated and taut condition over the vanes 14, thereby pinning the vanes 14 against the plate 12. This holds the vanes 14 and, in this example, the files 35 in between the vanes 14 securely.

[0027] The hooking end 40, as seen in FIGS. 7, 8, and 8a can include a sleeve 44 that surrounds the restraining band 16. The sleeve 44 includes a first portion 45 which is cylindrical and thus surrounds and compresses the band 16. The sleeve 44 further includes a second portion 47 in which the sleeve 44 is only semi-cylindrical and thus forms a "U" in cross-section. The sleeve 44 can be made of a hard material such as steel which can be rolled around the band 16. The sleeve 44 creates a stiff

and durable surface for placing the band 16 over and around the catch 26. In another example, the sleeve 44 might not be used at all.

[0028] In a typical use of the desk top filer 10, a user would place the filer 10 in a useful area of his or her workstation 49. The user can flex open the first vane 14a and place a file on the plate 12, then allow the first vane 14a to flex back over the file. The user may then place a second file on top of the first vane 14a and under the second vane 14b in the same way. In this manner, the user can sequentially place a number of files on his or her desk. By placing the vanes 14a, 14b, ... in between each file, the files are organized in a manner that makes them easy to locate. Of course, the user may place a file in between any of the vanes 14, and the user may fill the filer 10 with files in any sequence. To secure the files and vanes 14 against the plate 12, the restraining band 16 can be extended across the vanes 14 and the hooking end 40 can be latched over the catch 26 in the plate 12. To further aid the user in organizing his or her desk, a label 34 may be placed on the free end 36 of the vane 14, and indicia relating to which file is stored, or what must be done for the file may be placed on the label 34.

[0029] In a further use of the filer 10, the filer 10 can easily be transported with the files 35 still maintained in the filer 10. A user simply may grasp the handle 24 and carry the filer 10. The files 35 are maintained in the filer 10 due to the band 16 restraining the files 35 within the vanes 14. The vanes 14 and the band 16 of the filer 10 allows the filer 10 to be transported in a vertical orientation.

[0030] The filer 10 can also be hung vertically and still maintain files 35 against the plate 12 and within the vanes 14. A nail or clip can be placed in a wall as in commonly known, and the filer 10 can be hung on the wall by placing the opening 22 over the nail or clip. By using the filer 10 in such a manner, even more space can

be cleared on a workspace 49, and the files 35 can be maintained in a useful and accessible area.

[0031] A second example of a desk top filer 50 is shown in FIG. 9. It includes a plate 52 and a plurality of vanes 54, which, as opposed to the first example, are rotatably attached to the plate 52, including first vane 54a, second vane 54b, etc.

[0032] The plate 52, as seen in FIG. 10, includes a first section 56 and a second section 58, separated substantially in half by a fold line 60. The plate 52 includes a plurality of slots 62 arranged in slot pairs 64. An axis B-B is defined between the slots 62 of one pair 64. The plate 52 further includes a first handle 66 and a second handle 68.

[0033] The vanes 54 include tabs 70 like in the first example. However, in this example, the vanes 54 do not include a tongue. Instead of a tongue, the vanes 54 include a removed section 72, as shown best in FIG. 11. In this example, the vanes 54 are similarly inserted into the slots 62 of the plate 52 and attached to the plate 52. Because the vanes 54 do not include a tongue that resists rotation about an axis, the vanes 54 are freely rotatable about an axis B-B.

[0034] To secure the vanes 54 and the files against the filer 50, the second section 58 is folded about the fold line 60 over the vanes 54 and the first section 56, as seen in FIG. 12 and described by arrow 61. The first half 56 can then be secured to the second half 58 by any means known in the art, including snaps or clips, or by simply holding the two handles 66 and 68 together.

[0035] From the foregoing, one of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the present disclosure sets forth a device and method for organizing a work space with a desktop filer. However, one of ordinary skill in the art could readily apply the novel

teachings of this disclosure to any number of situations in which a surface with multiple items requires organizing. This includes, but is not limited to, compact discs, books, maps, retail store displays, etc. As such, the teachings of this disclosure shall not be considered to be limited to the specific examples disclosed herein, but to include all applications within the spirit and scope of the invention.